

Q&A Summary from the NPS Project Development for RFA Webinar – May 20, 2020

Question 1: Are the IP boundary GIS layers available as a shape file?

Answer 1: Yes, these layers are available for download. Instructions are available in the DEQ NPS BMP manual that Lauren will discuss later or we can provide those instructions later. Please note this layer is updated at least annually so periodic upload of new shape files is advised.

Question 2: Can you provide an example of a septic bmp project?

Answer 2: Septic BMP projects are mainly cost-share projects to provide funds to homeowners to address failing/failed septic systems and correct these to improve water quality conditions. Generally, these cost-share projects provide septic tank pumpouts, repairs, replacements, and installations (latter two for conventional systems only), connection to public sewer, and finally installation of alternative septic systems. These are all to address straight pipes of failing/failed septic systems.

Question 3: Any recommendations for identifying and recruiting? Specifically, how to be proactive in identification and recruitment. Could I do on-going work to understand who potential partners are and what are their needs are based on regional IPs?

Answer 3: Depends on the watershed and previous work done in the IP development process. Some applicants have done stream surveys to identify straight pipes as a way to identify potential partners/participants. Some IPs get specific with homeowner associations, community groups, farmer networks, etc. IP may good resource, although older IP may need more ground truthing to see if still accurate. We do rely on applicants/partners on the ground and in the community to be the local experts on how to identify potential participants.

Question 4: Can WQIF funds be used to meet VPDES requirements?

Answer 4: There is not a material difference between NPDES and VPDES permits. As such, the language in the BMP Manual regarding WQIF funding being eligible for NPDES permit activity may also apply to VPDES permitting.

Question 5: Will these slides be available if no video is available?

Answer 5: Yes, slides will be made available.

Question 6: Can Section 319(h) grant funds can be used on a BMP that would provide "marketable" credits" (such as a Nutrient or Wetlands "Bank" to the landowner)?

Answer 6: No. This limitation applies broadly to federal cost-share assistance programs, so in addition to Section 319 grants, the same prohibition applies to use of Agricultural Cost-Share assistance provided by NRCS and FSA. 319(h) can often be used for establishing the base line nature after which additional BMPs would generate the credits, but 319(h)-funded BMPs cannot generate credits that can be sold.

Question 7: It looks like the [Septic System and Private Well Service Provides map](#) linked for Septic contractors is about wells. Perhaps I am looking at the wrong map?

Answer 7: The map has multiple types of service providers, including well providers. Use the check boxes next to the type of service provider in the key on the left-hand side of the page to display the type of service provider you'd like to see on the map.

Question 8: Our IP is focused on bacteria. One of our partners has applied for a NFWF grant that identifies non-bacterial projects but takes place in the same geographical areas. We have worked with

the partner on identifying these but, if we get 319 funding and the partner gets the NFWF grant, we want to make sure there is not a conflict. Do you have any specific guidance for potential conflicts?

Answer 8: Bacteria and non-bacteria projects can be very complementary. Sometimes the same BMPs (e.g. stream exclusion) can be very important BMPs for both initiatives. It is important that as much as possible that there is a collaborative approach. Perhaps don't think of these two grant projects/efforts and too different. If there is concern that the two source of funding may compete for homes/farms to participate there are ways to avoid this through collaborative efforts, like team meetings.

Question 9: If we get a letter from DCR when we apply for 319 that provides state VACS cost-share as match, is that all that is needed to show the match? Or do we need to get a subsequent letter from DCR to document the match when we are reporting out during the project?

Answer 9: Any requirements for application (e.g. match letter) is used to document that the application meetings the minimal RFA requirements. There is different requirements for match documentation during a grant period, which are the same documentation requirements for 319(h) funding expenses.

Question 10: If a SWCD has identified more producers in our IP area that we are currently working in can we ask for additional funds and extend the current grant or will we writing a whole new grant application?

Answer 10: First to clarify: This answer only pertains to an application who has a project currently receiving 319(h) funding for BMP implementation in a designated IP area. In the past DEQ has amended a contract for an existing project to add time and funding to support implementation beyond what was originally outlined in a scope of work. We cannot say at the moment if there is funding available to extend existing contracts and we need more detail about the project to confirm this would be a possibility. If additional funding were not available or another reason exists for why DEQ would not chose to amend the existing contract, then the grantee would need to submit a new grant application to be considered for additional funding.

Question 11: Are the IP areas designated by DEQ as areas of higher need? What's the basis for IP areas?

Answer 11: Most are based off of TMDL studies developed by DEQ from identified water quality issues in those areas. EPA requires 319(h) funded be restricted to those areas with IPs that have been approved by DEQ and EPA. The IPs list of all of the actions that need to be done to meet the water quality goals of those plans. There are times you can expand the boundaries of an IP area beyond what the TMDL area is and that is done through a participatory process of community stakeholders who provide input on what's needed locally.